(b) if so, the areas declared as drought hit in Kachh Saurashtra region;

(c) the number of talukas so far covered under the DPAR and the number proposed to be covered during 1996-97; and

(d) the nature of assistance given so far or porposed to be given by the Government to mitigate the sufferings of the people?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) According to the infomration received from the Government of Gujarat, the State Government had declared 625 villages in 12 Talukas affected by scarcity and 3365 villages in 61 Talukas affected by semi-scarcity conditions in the Kachh-Saurashtra region, due to inadequate rains during last year. However, it is reported that rains have now been received in these areas.

(c) 52 Blocks in 10 districts of Gujarat are covered under the Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP). From 1995-96, area development under DPAP has been taken up on watershed basis. 469 watershed projects are to be completed upto 1998-99 under the Programme. The Central Government has allocated Rs. 1,545 lakhs for this Programme in 1996-97.

(d) Government of India have released two instalments of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for 1996-97 amounting to Rs. 52.35 crores to enable the State Government to undertake necessary relief measures in the affected areas.

Rise in the Prices of Agricultural Inputs

640. SHRI IQBAL SINGH : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of rise in prices of agricultural inputs during the year 1995-96;

(b) the percentage of rise in the support price of foodgrains during this period;

(c) the percentage of rise in the production of these foodgrains during this period; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to control the price-rise in the agricultural inputs?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) The rise in the prices of agricultural inputs during the year 1995-96 has been provisionally estimated as 4.0%.

(b) The Minimum support prices of foodgrains during 1995-96 have been raised by 6.1%.

(c) The production of foodgrains during 1995-96 is likely to show a marginal decline of 0.4% over the previous year.

(d) The Government has been controlling the prices of certain agricultural inputs falling under the administered price regime like some of the fertilizers, canal irrigation, electricity, diesel and other petroleum products. The Government has also been taking steps to supply, at reasonable prices, some of the other inputs like certified seeds, plant protection chemicals and agricultural implements & machinery. The Government has recently enhanced the rates of concession on phosphatic and potassic fertilizers.

Direct Train from Delhi to Kotdwara

641. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any action on the proposal submitted by the Members of Parliament recently for introduction of direct train service for the people of hill districts of U.P. from Delhi to Kotdwara;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) by when the said places would be connected by direct train service; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (d) Direct travel facility between Delhi and Kotdwara is already available in the form of 5 (five) through coaches (1 Sleeper, 3 Unreserved IInd Class and 1 First-cum-Second class) running by 4041/4042 Mussorie Express and 1KN/8KN Passengers with detaching/attaching of coaches at Najibabad. The Railways are examining the feasibility of reducing the lieover period of coaches at Najibabad by changing the timings of the connecting Kotdwara-Najibabad passengers.

However, the demands for introduction of a direct train between Delhi and Kotdwara have been examined more than once but not found feasible of implementation immediately due to resource & operational constraints including saturated terminals in Delhi area.

Establishment of South Western Railway Zone in Hubli

642. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have taken a decision to establish South Western Railway Zone in Hubli in Karnataka;

(b) if so, by when the Zone is likely to function; and

(c) if answer to part (a) is in the negative whether such a proposal is before the Government and if so, by when a decision would be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Government has decided to create additional Railway Zonal offices with Headquarters at Jaipur, Allahabad, Bangalore, Hajipur, Jabalpur and Bhubaneswar.

Flaws in Education System

643. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the newsitem, captioned "Flaws in education system discovered", as reported in the Hindustan Times, dated the 8th June, 1996;

(b) if so, whether the education system in the country has been found inadequate;

(c) if so, whether Government propose to bring amendments to the education policy to make it effective and job-oriented; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPTT. OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Report refers mainly to the issues like drop-out rates resources and quality only.

(c) and (d) The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and its Programme of Action (POA) were up-dated and placed before the Parliament in 1992. As of now, the emphasis would be on toning up implementation and stepping up resources for education so that there is a better linkage between education and the world of work and improvement of access, retention and quality at all states of education, particularly elementary education.

कुलियों द्वारा अनारक्षित डिब्बों पर कब्जा किया जाना

644. **श्री रामदेव भंडारी:**
श्री ईश दत्त यादव:
श्री नागमणि:

क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान दिनांक 3 जुलाई, 1996 के नवभारत टाइम्स के दिल्ली संस्करण में "अनारक्षित डिब्बों पर कब्जा कर सीटें बेचने वाले गिरोह सक्रिय" शीर्षक से प्रकाशित समाचार की ओर दिलाया गया है;

(ख) क्या सरकार को इस बात की जानकारी है कि सिर्फ दिल्ली में ही नहीं, बल्कि देश के पटना, हावड़ा जैसे कई महत्वपूर्ण रेलवे स्टेशनों पर अनारक्षित डिब्बों की सीटों पर कब्जा कर बेचने वाला गिरोह सक्रिय है जिसमें पुलिस, रेल कार्मिक तथा कुली शामिल हैं; यदि हां तो, किन-किन रेलवे स्टेशनों के संबंध में इस प्रकार की शिकायतें मिली हैं और ऐसी शिकायतों की संख्या कितनी है; और

(ग) सरकार इस संबंध में क्या कार्यवाही कर रही है?

रेल मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री सतपाल महाराज): (क) जी हां.

(ख) पिछले एक वर्ष में, मुंबई छत्रपति शिवाजी टर्मिनस, मुंबई सैन्ट्रल, बांद्रा टर्मिनल, हावड़ा, दिल्ली जंक्शन, मद्रास सैन्ट्रल और मद्रास एषाम्बूर स्टेशनों के संबंध में कुल 13 शिकायतें प्राप्त हुई थी। इसके अलावा, आयोजित की गई निवारक जांचों के दौरान, लाइसेंसधारी भारिकों और समाज-विरोधी तत्वों द्वारा अनारक्षित सवारी डिब्बों में सीटें घेरने की घटनाएं दादर टर्मिनस, पुणे, न्यू जलपाईगुड़ी और कुर्ला टर्मिनस पर पकड़ में आई।

(ग) गाड़ियों में स्थान घेरने की घटनाएं रोकने के लिए उठाए गए विभिन्न कदम इस प्रकार हैं:-